Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
August 9, 2024

East Region

Nick Myatt, Region Manager

Lewis's woodpecker research update

ODFW partnered with Cal Poly Humbolt during June and July 2024 to research Lewis's woodpeckers at White River Wildlife Management Area. The effort was led by a graduate student and a team of assistants with support from ODFW White River staff, The Dalles, Bend and Clackamas wildlife district staff and interns, as well as Conservation Program biologists.

The crew captured Lewis's woodpeckers to install radio (Motus) tags on them that will help track their movement and provide information about their migration.



Lewis's woodpecker fitted with lightweight Motus tag, June 2024. Photo by Cameron Piper, Cal Poly Humbolt.

The Lewis's woodpecker population at the wildlife area is the only year-round population found in Oregon. While there are Lewis's nesting or overwintering in other areas of Oregon, White River is special in that at least a portion of the birds seem to spend their entire year there. It is unknown what percentage of this population is residential (year-round) and what percentage may be partially migratory. Part of the research work that the team and ODFW is conducting is to understand the drivers as to why the White River population migration strategy differs from other areas in the state. The team is also researching habitat types and nest cavity architecture.



Lewis's woodpecker fitted with a Motus tag and identification bands, July 2024. ODFW photo.

During the 2024 nesting season, the team from Cal Poly identified more than 50 active nest cavities and conducted capture operations on more than a dozen woodpeckers. Due to the biology of Lewis's woodpeckers and their excellent eyesight, a clear net or plastic bag attached to a telescopic pole must be used for captures.

The team was in place at nest cavities most mornings before sunrise. Once the adult woodpecker left the nest to forage, it would fly into the bag unharmed where it could then be handled, tagged, banded, measured, and released. Given the incredible acrobatic flying ability of Lewis's woodpeckers, mist nets, which are

commonly used for bird capture cannot successfully be used. The team has had to adapt their capture protocol based on foraging and nesting behavior at the site. These techniques may continue to change seasonally as efforts continue. For example, drop net style traps may be employed during times of year where insects are less abundant.



Cameron Piper, Cal Poly Humbolt, waits with a net at a Lewis's woodpecker nest cavity, June 2024. ODFW photo.

Motus radio tags on Lewis's woodpeckers and other species work with a network of automatic telemetry towers such as the two installed at White River wildlife area in 2023 as well as at Ladd Marsh, Elkhorn, and Klamath. Towers are scattered across the world, including many in Oregon, and when a tagged bird flies approximately 15 kilometers or closer, it registers a signal and records the occurrence.

Anyone can visit the Motus.org website to view data on tagged species such as those that were detected on the Smock Prairie (White River wildlife area) antenna array: https://motus.org/data/receiverDeploymentDetections?id=10264



A capture crew works together on a Lewis's woodpecker that was fitted with a Motus tag, banded, and measured, June 2024. ODFW photo.

This work, as well as the continued expansion of the Motus network by ODFW is funded by an OCRF grant, a Good Neighbor Authority Agreement with the BLM, and lottery funds. All work is done under federal banding permits held by ODFW and Cal Poly Humboldt.

Klamath Basin lamprey survey

Members of the Klamath Lamprey Technical Team, including ODFW's statewide lamprey coordinator, and staff from the Klamath Fish district, U.S. Forest Service, and The Klamath Tribes sampled various locations in the upper Klamath Basin to collect voucher specimens and tissue samples of native lampreys.



Team members conduct a backpack electrofishing survey for lamprey in the Klamath Basin, 2024. ODFW photo.

This is a continuation of efforts to improve understanding of the lamprey species diversity in the upper Klamath Basin, and to provide a monitoring baseline of this diversity prior to the

return of anadromous Pacific Lamprey back into the upper basin once full fish passage is restored.



A lamprey from the Klamath Basin survey in 2024 is collected as a specimen for OSU's Fish Collection lab. ODFW photo.

More information about native lampreys can be found on ODFW's Story Map: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/49b31df44c014dbdad85d08a36d021c8

Pronghorn workshop hosted by ODFW in Redmond

Oregon was the host state for the 30th biennial pronghorn workshop, sanctioned by the Western Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA).

ODFW hosted the event at Eagle Crest Resort in Redmond from June 24th - 27th. Commissioner Becky Hatfield-Hyde delivered the keynote address followed by a plenary panel session discussing issues in Oregon pronghorn habitat. There was then two days of talks and presentations of the latest pronghorn research and management techniques from biologists and scientists from across pronghorn range.

For the final day of the workshop, ODFW staff led a field tour to further promote discussion on issues and conservation in pronghorn habitat in Central Oregon at the very northwestern edge of the species' range. The tour covered portions of the Millican Plateau, highlighting the large solar farms and OHV areas that have bisected historic deer and pronghorn range.



Pronghorn workshop attendees participate in a field tour June 2024.

The tour also travelled to Brothers, where participants were hosted by Commissioner Hatfield-Hyde and her family on the Hatfield High Desert Ranch. Discussion centered on the unique landscape of the area, native vegetation species, and habitat improvement projects that have occurred on the ranch. Participants ranging from Alberta to Kansas to Texas were all very interested to learn about this part of the pronghorn range.

West Region

Chris Kern, Region Manager

Wolverine DNA results

ODFW received an update from Rocky Mountain Research Station on the identity of the mysterious wandering wolverine documented in Oregon in spring and summer of 2024. Genetic samples collected in Florence, Creswell, and North Bend, Oregon this year all belonged to the same male wolverine, an animal that very likely originated from a population in the Washington

Cascade mountains. The most recent Oregon wolverine sighting was near Gold Beach in July.



Wolverine photographed near Gold Beach in July.

Coyote-palooza success in Portland

ODFW held the first ever Coyote-palooza on June 1 – a street fair-style, urban coyote outreach event in downtown Portland. The event was located on the Portland State University campus next to the Saturday farmer's market. Over 15 partner organizations from the Portland Metro area participated: Bird Conservation Oregon, Humane Society of the United States, Institute for Natural Resources, Portland Urban Coyote Project, Willamette Riverkeeper, Bird Alliance of Oregon, Cascadia Wild, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon, Oregon Zoo, People of Color Outdoors, Oregon Metro, Portland Parks & Recreation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society, Humane Society of the United States, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Highlights included a passport that guided visitors through the event booths and take-home magnets and stickers with the Coyote-palooza logo and advice to reduce conflict.

ODFW staff and our partners interacted with and provided educational materials to over 1,000 people who visited the event. Coyote-palooza visitors and partners shared lots of positive feedback and we received many requests for the event to return next year.



Top: Coyote-palooza swag including magnets, stickers, temporary tattoos, t-shirts and event passports. Bottom: Booth signs. More photos.

New black-tailed deer research project begins

The Western Oregon Wildlife Research team began deploying grids of trail cameras across the Dixon WMU as part of a study aimed at estimating the population density of black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) in the thick forests of the western Cascades. Estimating deer population size is difficult in the heavily wooded and mountainous landscapes of western Oregon where common methods such as aerial counts from a helicopter or plane aren't possible.

Remote cameras are a great way to monitor wildlife presence in rugged areas, but it is difficult to calculate population size from cameras.

Research biologists will document distinguishing features on photographed deer, such as approximate age (juvenile or adult), sex, or number of antler points on a buck. This information can be used in partial-marked models, which can estimate population density and detection rates based on best guesses of individual deer IDs.

The cameras are placed in 25 grids of six cameras, with each camera spaced by 1km and 10 km between grids. This spacing increases the

likelihood that an individual deer is detected on more than one camera in a grid, helping researchers determine how big an area deer use and estimate density on the landscape.

The results of this study will help inform black-tailed deer management by providing an efficient way to obtain more accurate estimates of population size across western Oregon.

Northwestern pond turtle research project

ODFW is collaborating with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to study how Northwestern Pond turtles use the Provolt Seed Orchard Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) in Josephine County. The objectives are to determine their seasonal movement and habitat use and to locate nesting and overwintering areas. The project began in May 2024 and monitoring will continue through summer 2025.

To date, we have captured and marked eight individuals. Three individuals (one female and two males) were released with VHF transmitters to monitor movements. The most significant observation is that one of the newly telemetered male turtles immediately moved over one kilometer away from its capture location—off BLM land to adjacent private property where it is using a large irrigation pond. The other telemetered turtles have stayed close to their original capture locations.

The project has provided many opportunities to talk with local community members about the ecology of pond turtles and to learn more about how important the Provolt Seed Orchard SRMA is to the public. Funding for the project was provided by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, Oregon Wildlife Foundation, and Watchable Wildlife Foundation, with support from ODFW and BLM staff.



Conservation Program Intern Chase Lemmon collects a turtle trap containing two turtles along Williams Creek at Provolt SRMA.

North Umpqua Spring Chinook monitoring project update

In mid-April, Umpqua Fish District biologists began a North Umpqua River Spring Chinook salmon monitoring project (noted in the April 2024 West Region field report).

Biologists successfully placed 200 radio telemetry tags into spring Chinook salmon at Winchester Dam on the North Umpqua River. Collection took place from April 24 through June 18. District staff have been diligently scanning for tags via a mobile receiver and operating four stationary receivers.

There is a significant dichotomy in movement as some tags have been stationary for weeks, while others move five to six miles in a day. Several tags have been recovered from hatchery-origin fish returning to Rock Creek Hatchery. Tags implanted in hatchery-origin and wild fish have been detected from below Winchester Dam (river mile 1.5) and above Soda Springs Dam (river mile ~70.5).



Spring chinook radio tagged for monitoring.

Wildlife-friendly livestock fencing upgrades

Rogue wildlife personnel spent several days in June helping the Oregon Hunters Association and Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest wildlife and range personnel upgrade livestock exclusionary fencing to wildlife-friendly standards. Over 35 OHA volunteers from at least five different chapters were involved (Bend, Umpqua, Josephine, Rogue Valley, and Klamath). The new fence will be a "let down" fence that will be dropped in the winter months when cattle are not on the forest and will protect the sensitive wet meadow habitat of Willow Prairie. This meadow was also treated for conifer encroachment in the SW Cascade Meadow Enhancement Project. A total of 2.5 miles of fencing will be upgraded and it is impressive how much was completed in a few days. OHA received an Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund Grant to purchase the materials. The next meadow to receive fencing will be Short Creek Prairie which will begin in fall 2024.



ODFW staff and OHA volunteers install upgraded fencing.

Oregon State Police

Captain Casey Thomas, Fish & Wildlife Division



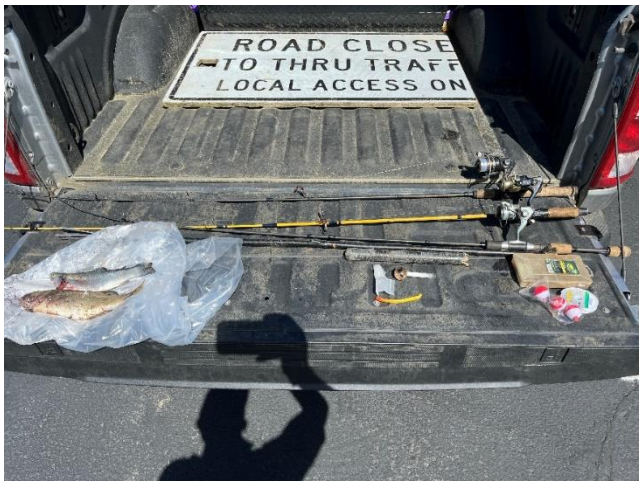
Young angler showing off his first Brook Trout

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper and Patrol Recruit were patrolling the Steens Mountains and stopped at Fish Lake for angler checks. A Mother and three kids were contacted; where a son had just caught his first Brook Trout off a brand-new fly rod, they got the day before. Mom explained that her son had taught himself to cast and tie the fly on the line by himself. The family was happy to see the Troopers and the young man was happy to pose for a picture with his fish and the Recruit.



OSP Trooper participating in Fish with a Cop event.

Multiple Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife and Patrol Division members, along with deputies from the Malheur County Sheriff's Office, officers from the Ontario Police Department, Malheur County Parole and Probation and the Payette Police Department participated in the annual Bully Creek Fish with a Cop Event. Approximately 35 kids were present and fished with the officers. Tackle boxes and fishing poles were donated to the kids by the local Ontario VFW Post. Several fish were caught by the kids on the bank and on boats on the water. The event was well received and all who participated had a great time.



Suspended anglers arrested and lodged in Lincoln County jail.

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper received a TIP that a known suspended angler was fishing Olalla Reservoir. Two Fish and Wildlife Troopers went to the reservoir and identified the angler's truck with an empty boat trailer connected; and another vehicle that belonged to the brother of the original suspended angler. The brother is also known to be suspended from angling for previous violations/contacts. Both anglers were observed fishing from the boat and when they pulled the boat from the water both anglers were placed under arrest and lodged in Lincoln County jail for Angling while Suspended and Take/Possession of Game Fish. One trout and bass were found in the boat. Three fishing rods, tackle, two fish, drug paraphernalia, and a gaff/spear were all seized.

Marine Resources Program

Justin Ainsworth, Marine Resources Program Manager

Historic paralytic shellfish toxin event

In late May, the Oregon coast experienced a historic and unprecedented Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) event. The event resulted in six cases of shellfish poisonings reported to ODFW on Sunday, May 26, by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and by May 30, that number reached 21. The OHA convened a large group of public health experts, ODFW, and Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to coordinate a PSP response.

First detected in mussels, and later detected in bay clams, oysters, and razor clams, toxin levels increased rapidly to extreme levels. This led to various area closures for all these species. By June 6, a coastwide closure was in place for bay and razor clams and commercial bay clams and oysters.

PSP is caused by a natural marine biotoxin (saxotoxin) produced by some species of microscopic algae and can accumulate in shellfish. People that consume shellfish with the toxin are susceptible to PSP. The last documented case of PSP in Oregon was 1973 (one person).

PSP shellfish harvest closure timeline:

- May 23:
  - Mussels: closed Cape Lookout to Seal rock State Park.
- May 26:
  - Mussels closed from Washington border south to Seal Rock State Park.
- May 30:
  - Mussels closed coastwide.
  - Bay clams (all species, recreational and commercial in bays) closed from Washington border to Cascade Head.
  - Razor clams closed from Yachats to the California border for both PSP and domoic acid. (Note: the area from Cape Blanco to the California border had been closed since Nov. 2023 for high levels of domoic acid.).

    - Oysters: commercial harvest closed in Tillamook Bay, Netarts Bay.
- June 6:
    - Bay clams (all species) closed coastwide.
    - Razor clams closed coastwide for both PSP and domoic acid.
    - Oysters: commercial harvest closed in Tillamook Bay, Netarts Bay, Umpqua River/Winchester Bay.
- June 14:
    - Razor clams open from Washington border to Yachats. This area closed as a precautionary measure June 6 (tests showed PSP levels were not elevated) as PSP levels had elevated very rapidly and were very high in other shellfish species.
    - Oysters: commercial oyster harvest reopened in Netarts and Tillamook bays.
- June 21:
    - Bay clams reopened from the Washington border to Cascade Head.
    - Razor clams reopened from Cape Blanco to California border.
- June 28:
    - Razor clams reopened the south coast section from the Coos Bay north jetty to the California border.
- July 5:
    - Mussels reopened from Coos Bay north jetty to the California border.
    - Bay clams reopened statewide.
- July 12:
    - Mussels reopened from the Washington border to Cape Lookout.

PSP outreach:

The MRP Public Information Officer convened a group from the I&E Division to create and execute a multi-pronged and extensive outreach effort to keep shellfish harvesters aware of the rapidly changing closures.

The standard outreach for shellfish harvest closures and reopening's are news releases, social media posts (typically Twitter/X), and Recreation Report updates. This was expanded to include:

- Coordination with OHA on their outreach.
- A live Q&A (YouTube and Facebook) May 31 with MRP shellfish project leader, Oregon Department of Agriculture's food safety specialist, and OHA's public health veterinarian.
- Both stories and posts to MyODFW Facebook; stories to MyODFW and ODFWMarine, Instagram accounts; MyODFW and ODFW Marine Twitter/X; and a statewide NextDoor post. Information from OHA was shared on ODFW social channels. Recruited a shellfish focused Instagram influencer to share closure information.
- Shellfish news releases were translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, and Traditional Chinese.
- Emails were sent to all shellfish and other license holders alerting them of the confirmed shellfish poisoning cases/discard any mussels harvested from the central and north coasts (May 29); coastwide mussel closure (May 30); and information on OHA's investigation into shellfish poisoning cases and a link to their survey (May 31); bay and razor clam closure coastwide (June 7).
- A 'pop-up' message to all shellfish license customers was added to the ELS. It alerted customers of the closures prior to purchase.
- An ELS system-wide alert was added so that all ELS customers and license sale agents saw closure information when logging into the system.
- Talking points were distributed to licensing and ODFW office staff.
- Oregon Emergency Response System sent out phone calls and text messages to all cell phones associated with counties with individuals impacted by PSP.

Marine Reserves Program to widen Hook and Line survey's angler pool

The Oregon Marine Reserves Program is casting a wider net this summer in its quest to engage underserved communities as volunteer anglers to take part in a rare opportunity of fishing for a day in marine reserve waters normally off-limits to all fishing. The program's popular Hook and Line surveys resume in late August and this time the trips will bring the ocean outdoors to more of Oregon's underserved communities thanks to a federal grant and the Marine Reserves' community engagement program.

Ecological Team Leader Moritz Schmid secured a NOAA-Fisheries grant, sponsored through the Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership, that includes funds for six scholarships for members of underserved communities to join Hook and Line surveys this fall at Cascade Head Marine Reserve. The Marine Reserves Program is kicking in money to double that number to engage even more members of Oregon's marine fishing community who are not normally able to participate in these surveys.



This 39-inch lingcod was one of the highlights of this spring's Hook and Line catches.

Marine Reserves Program Leader Lindsay Aylesworth has long sought to expand coastwide participation in this opportunity for ocean anglers to help collect data for the program. Over time, it has become apparent that our volunteers aren't fully representative of Oregonians or our coastal communities. Some community members may be unable to participate because of financial burdens created from a day off work, travel costs, and the need for overnight stay to make the early-morning start. Through these fishing scholarships, Aylesworth hopes to remove or reduce these barriers to participation so that engagement in this community science aspect of the program is viable for more Oregonians.

The grants will pay up to $305 per angler per day toward participant's travel, lodging and food when fishing out of Depoe Bay. The grants will fund two new faces on each of the six planned survey trips.

Marine reserves staff are coordinating with a local community partner, the Cascade Head Biosphere Collaborative, and contractor Dockside Charters, to recruit scholarship applicants on this inaugural effort. Applicants will need to go through ODFW's volunteer onboarding process and are required to have marine angling experience.

Hook and Line surveys are some of the most popular ways the public can aid the program's Ecological Team in sampling the fish swimming in these marine reserves. Surveys this year have been some of the best in program history. During May 20 sampling at Cascade Head, nine volunteers caught 406 fish during 3.5 hours of catch-and-release fishing. Not to be outdone, the May 29 anglers caught and released a record 431 fish over just 2.25 hours of actual fishing in the eight-hour trip at the same reserve. Black rockfish dominate the catch, but anglers so far this year have caught lingcod up to 39 inches and even a halibut estimated at more than 50 pounds. In spring surveys this year, participants caught 14 different species of fish.

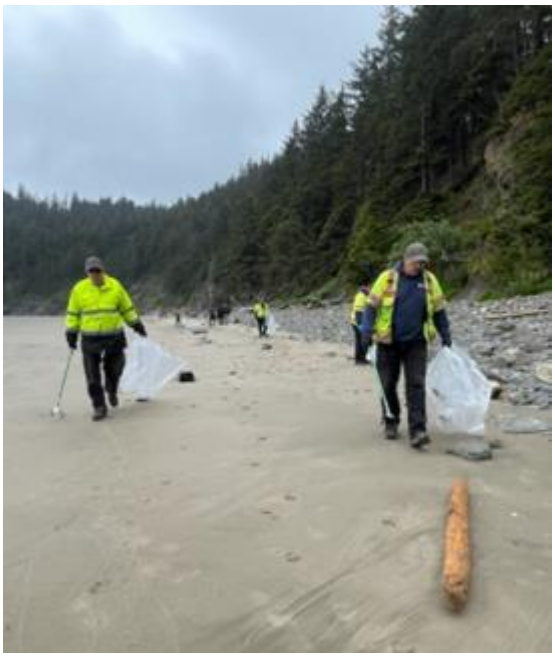
ODFW responds to Oregon's "Mystery Oil Event"

Over the 26-day period from May 23 to June 7, oil and tar balls from an unknown source washed ashore along the outer coasts of WA and OR where they polluted the beaches, oiled birds and other wildlife, and became incorporated into sand, wrack-lines, and driftwood. The "OR/WA Mystery Oil Event" progressed southward along the coast, and emergency response activities were coordinated under the Unified Command System (UCS) which brought together more than 100 responders from 14 different federal, state, and local agencies and response organizations across WA, OR, and CA. Teams were established to track the arrival of the oil and tar, identify beaches in need of clean-up, conduct field surveys to locate and rehabilitate dead and oiled wildlife, and to provide outreach.



An oil-soaked bird is rescued from a beach.

More than 30 ODFW staff were called into service to provide round-the-clock technical assistance to the Unified Command, and to serve as "boots-on-the-ground" in support of many aspects of the emergency response. In particular, the ODFW Team took on multiple responsibilities, including: (1) coordination of wildlife responses within the UCS Environmental Unit; (2) identification of the southern-most point of arrival for oil and tar along the Oregon coast; (3) conducting initial surveys of beaches before and after contamination; (4) participation in shoreline cleanup assessment surveys; (5) collection, handling, and transport of oiled birds and other wildlife; (6) retrieval of dead wildlife and maintenance of specimens within the wildlife morgue: and seven (7) communications and develop media outreach.



ODFW crews scoured 36 miles of beaches.

Over the course of the response, the assessment teams surveyed more than 300 miles of coastline, and the clean-up teams removed nearly 2,000 lbs. of oil and oiled debris from 36 miles of beaches. On June 7, the Unified Command determined that the response teams had achieved the endpoint goals for clean-up established by the Environmental Units for OR and WA, and the UCS for the event was demobilized.